Conscience

THE

BEST FRIEND

UPON EARTH:

OR,

The Happy Effects

Of Keeping

A Good Conscience.

Very Useful for this Age.

By HENRY STUBBES, Minister of the Gospel.

Acts 23. 1. *I have lived in all Good Conscience before God untill this day.*

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Th.
8° Z. 151

To the Readers CONSCIENCE.

Conſcience; how thou wilt take it I know not: however I have adventured to write a few lines unto thee, becauſe I know thou art well acquainted with my Reader, and canſt do much with him if thou wilt; and if thou be a good Conſcience thou wilt. Naturally good I know thou art, I would hope that thou art Spiritually good, purged from dead works by the Bloud of Chriſt, *Heb.* 9.14. *and made good* by the power of the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* 3.21. *and art able to give a reaſon by thy* hope to be ſaved, 1 *Pet.* 3. 15,16. *and that thou ſtandeſt upon thy watch and ward* againſt Sin, Satan, and the World, 1 *Tim.* 1.18,19. *However thou art naturally good;*

ſomething thou haſt retained ſince the Fall, all is not loſt: Reaſon, Knowledge, and the power of Reflection thou haſt; and to ſpeak according to thy Knowledge, and to tell every one with whom thou haſt to do the truth how 'tis with them, is thy eſſential property. Even thoſe (John 8.6,9.) *that tempted Chriſt, that they might have ſomething to accuſe him of, were convicted of their Conſciences; their Conſciences dealt plainly with them, and told them the truth, that they were not without ſin.*

Conſcience, thou art the Candle of the Lord ſearching the inward parts, the moſt ſecret thoughts, deſires, and intents of the heart, Prov.20.27. *according to that of the Apoſtle,* 1 Cor.2.11. What man knoweth the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of a man within him? *Thou didſt tell* Pharaoh *that he was wicked,* Exod.9.27. *and* Joſeph's *Bretheren, that they were guilty,* Gen. 42.21. *and* Judas *that he had ſinned in betraying innocent bloud,* Mat.27.

3,4.

3,4. *I pray thee do as much for my Reader if thou ſee cauſe for it. It may be thou art a well read Conſcience in the Law of God, enlightned and rightly informed: If thou be ſo, thou knoweſt my Readers eſtate Godward, whether good or bad, in the ſtate of Grace or Nature. Thou muſt needs know, for thou art always at home with him, and there is not a thought in his Heart but thou art privy to it, nor a word in his tongue but thou heareſt it, nor a work of his hand but thou ſeeſt it. God hath made thee his Spy and Overſeer, that ſo thou mayſt be a true Witneſs for or againſt him.*

Conſcience, thou canſt tell whether my Reader be a Child of wrath, as he was born, Eph.2.3. *or whether he* be born again, and ſo be a Child of God by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, Gal.3.26.

Thou canſt tell whether he be as yet to this day in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity, *as he* Acts 8. 23.

Thou canſt tell whether he be in the fleſh, and do live after the fleſh or no.

Whether he be the ſame that ever he was, or whether he be a new creature, the workmanſhip of God by a ſecond creation, born of God and of the Spirit, ſanctified throughout, cleanſed from filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit.

Whether he worſhip God in ſpirit and truth.

Whether he have only the form of godlineſs, or the power alſo.

Whether he be a Chriſtian outwardly only, or inwardly alſo.

Whether a hearer only, or a doer alſo.

Whether he have only a name to live, or be alive indeed.

Whether he be barren and unfruitful, or fruitful in every good work.

Whether his Knowledge be affective and operative, and ſo ſaving.

Whether his Faith be unfeigned, the Faith of Gods Elect, working, purifying, conquering.

Whe-

Whether his Repentance be Repentance unto Life, bearing the fruits of Careſulneſs, Clearing, Indignation, Fear, Vehement Deſire, Zeal, Revenge, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11.

Whether his Obedience be univerſal.

Whether he eſteem all Gods Precepts concerning all things to be right, *and whether he* hate every falſe way, *Pſal.* 119. 128.

Conſcience, thou canſt tell whether my Reader have laid aſide all malice and all guile, and hypocriſies, and envies, and evil ſpeakings, *as he is required,* 1 Pet. 2. 1.

Whether he deſires the ſincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby, *ver.* 2.

And whether he do grow or not.

Whether he be contented with what he hath attained, or whether he preſs forward, *after* Pauls *example,* Phil. 3. 13, 14.

Whether he make Religion the greateſt buſineſs he has to do in the world.

Whether Gods Word be his Rule in all.

Whether Gods glory be his end in all.

Whether he ſeek his own things, or the things of Chriſt, moſt.

Whether his Heart be Godward, Chriſtward, Heavenward.

Whether his Converſation be in Heaven, and his Affections upon things above.

Whether he have Oyl in his Veſſel as well as in his lamp.

Whether he can prove his Union with Chriſt.

Whether he has made his Calling and Election ſure.

Whether he be yet made meet for the inheritance of the Saints in light.

Whether he love the appearing of Chriſt.

And Conſcience thou canſt tell whether my Reader does live by the Faith of the Son of God, *as* Paul *did*, Gal. 2. 20.

Whether he ſhew out of a good converſation

verſation his works with meekneſs of wiſdom, James 3. 13.

What work and labour of love *he hath ſhewed towards the Name of Chriſt, whether he have* miniſtred to the Saints, *and do miniſter*, Heb 6. 10.

Whether he fulfil all the Wills of God, *as* David *did*, Acts 13. 22.

Whether he follow God fully, *as* Caleb *did*.

Whether he be righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameleſs, *as* Zechary *and* Elizabeth, Luke 1. 6.

Whether he be holy in all manner of converſation, *as he is required to be*, 1 Pet. 1. 15.

Whether his Converſation in this World be in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, 2 Cor. 1. 12.

Whether he be zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 14.

Whether the zeal of Gods Houſe do even eat him up.

Whether he be contented to be nothing that God may be all, and to be accounted vile ſo God may be honoured.

Whether he deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow Chriſt, Mat. 16. 24.

Whether he rejoyce in hope, and be patient in tribulation, and continue inſtant in prayer, Rom. 12. 12.

Now Conſcience, I have an earneſt requeſt to thee; and ſeeing thou always lodgeſt in the boſom of my Reader, thou canſt not want an opportunity to do what I ſhall requeſt of thee. My Requeſt is this, That thou wouldſt deal honeſtly with my Reader, and tell him the truth of his eſtate what it is.

If he be a child of wrath, and in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity, *tell him ſo, and ſay to him as* Peter *to* Simon Magus, Acts 8. 23. I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity, a child of wrath, *and the wrath of God will come*

up-

upon thee if thou continue ſo Eph. 5. 6.

If my Reader do live after the fleſh, (*and ſure thou canſt tell whether he do ſo or no.*) *Good Conſcience tell him that he dos ſo, and that if he ſhall continue ſo to do, he ſhall die; and ſhew him* Rom. 8. 13. *and bid him read it.*

If my Reader do the work of the Lord negligently, *deceitfully; if he* offer to God a corrupt thing when he has a male to offer, *tell him of the curſe which hangs over his head, and make him read* Jer. 48. 10. Mat. 1. 14.

If he have no prayer in his Family, cauſe him to read Jer. 10 25.

If he remember not the Sabbath day to keep it holy, *give him no reſt, till thou haſt gotten him to read and ponder upon what is written* Jer. 17. 27.

If he be an idle, ſlothful, unprofitable ſervant in the Lords work, *ſhew him* Mat. 25. 30.

If he be an unfruitful tree in the Lords vineyard, *prevail with him (for thou canſt do it) to read again and*

again

again the words of Chriſt, Luke 13. 7, 8, 9. *ſhew him alſo*, Math. 7. 17. *and* Heb. 6, 7, 8. *Say to him, Why doſt thou not take the Bible and read it?*

Conſcience, if my Reader believe not in Jeſus Chriſt, if he do not obedientially reſt upon him alone for ſalvation, tell him that if he do not believe the ſooner he muſt be damned, Mark 16. 16.

If he have not repented, if he have not confeſſed his ſin, and mourned for it, and turned from it unto God; *tell him he muſt do it or periſh, and ſhew him*, Luke 13. 3, 5.

If he be unrighteous, good Conſcience tell him, that if he continue ſuch, he ſhall never inherit the Kingdom of God. *Compell him to read*, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.

If he be unholy, tell him, that he ſhall never ſee the Lord; *and let him not be quiet till he has taken the Bible and read it in*, Heb. 12. 14.

If he be unregenerate, tell him, he cannot (if he continue ſo) ſee the King-

dom

dom of God. *Put the Bible into his hand, and bid him read,* John 3. 3, 5.

Conſcience, if my Reader be a neglecter of that great Salvation *profered in the Goſpel, and continue ſo, tell him that he cannot* eſcape damnation, *and ſhew him* Heb. 2. 3.

If he turn away from him that ſpeaketh from Heaven *to him, tell him that he cannot* eſcape the wrath of God; *and ſhew him* Heb. 12. 25. *and* Acts 3. 23. *and ask him whether he be not afraid of deſtruction?*

And if he ſhall ſtill refuſe to hearken, and ſtill pull away the ſhoulder, and ſtop his ears, and make his heart like an Adamant ſtone, tell him that great wrath will come upon him, Zech. 7. 11, 12.

Conſcience, if my Reader be one of that black catalogue 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. *or* a doer of the works of the fleſh, Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. *tell him, that he* ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God. *And if he ask thee what warrant thou*

haſt

haſt to ſay ſo, refer him to the forecited Scriptures.

Conſcience, if my Reader ſhould be fearful, unbelieving, abominable; if he ſhould be a Murderer, a Whoremonger, a Sorcerer, an Idolater, a Liar; tell him that if he continue ſuch, he muſt have his part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone: *and make him read* Rev. 21. 8.

Conſcience, if my Reader be a proud perſon, tell him from God, that God is able to abaſe him, Dan. 4. 37. *and will be above him,* Exod. 18. 11. *and bring him down,* Pſal. 18. 27. *and low* Prov. 29. 23. *even to deſtruction,* Prov. 16. 18. *and* 15. 25. *Get him alſo to read* Iſa. 2. 11. to 18. *and* Iſa. 3. 16. to the end.

If my Reader be a covetous perſon, good Conſcience, let him know from the Word of God.

1. *That he is* a troubler of his own houſe Prov. 15. 27.

2. *That he is in Gods account an* Ido-

Idolater, Col. 3. 5. Eph. 5. 5.

3. *That he is* hated and abhorred of God, Pſal. 10. 3.

4. *That he is ſorely threatned* Iſa 5. 1. Iſa. 10 1, 2. Job 20. 15, 19, 20. *and* 27. 16, 17, 18. 1 Cor. 16. 10. *And get him to read* 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.

And Conſcience, if my Reader be a voluptuous perſon, an adulterous unclean perſon, I muſt intreat thee to ſend him to the Bible, and to ſee that he read and conſider theſe following Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament; Prov. 2. 18, 19. Prov. 5. 3, 4, 5, 6, to 14. Prov. 6. 26, 32, 33. Prov. 7. 21. to the end of the chap. Prov. 22. 14. Prov. 23. 27. Prov. 29. 3. Eccleſ. 7. 26. 1 Cor. 5. 9. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Eph. 5. 5, 6. Heb. 13. 4. Rev. 21. 8. *and* 22. 15.

Good Conſcience, be at him again and again, and never leave him till thou haſt gotten him to go into his Cloſet, and there to ſpend one quarter or half an hour in pondering on thoſe Scriptures.

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To the Readers Conſcience.

Conſcience, do thy office; thou art Gods Deputy, fail not to be faithful.

Poſſibly thou mayeſt ſay, That thou haſt done it again and again, but they will not hear, they are deaf to me as well as to you. But Conſcience, if thou be a good Conſcience, ſpeak louder, ſpeak not with ſo low a voice, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, for thou art ordained a Preacher to ſhew my Readers their tranſgreſſions and ſins.

Be not ſilent whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, yet ſpeak unto them. I know my Readers, many of them, will endeavour to ſilence and ſtop thy mouth; they do not love to be told of their faults, or what their eſtate is: but Conſcience be not thou rebellious, but do that which is thine Office to do. I know thou haſt much to charge my Readers with.

Some of them (thou knoweſt) do neither read the Scriptures, nor pray in their Families, nor Cathechize them that are committed to their charge.

Others

Others pray not in their Cloſets, nor do they commune with their own hearts about their ſpiritual eſtates; they examine not themſelves, whether they be in the Faith, or whether Chriſt be in them; they compare not themſelves with the Word of God, to know how it is with them.

Some ſpend their time and ſtrength, and Eſtates in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, in Chambering and Wantonneſs, in Strife and Envying.

Some trifle away their precious time in Taverns, Ale-houſes, Play-houſes, Coffee-houſes.

Some embrace this preſent world with Demas.

Some are lovers of Pleaſures more than lovers of God.

Some acknowledge God in their words, and in their works deny him.

Some have left their firſt love.

Some are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold.

Some ſay, Lord, Lord, but will not do

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the things that he ſays unto them.

Some believe not with their Hearts what with their Mouth they ſay they do believe.

Some confeſs ſin with their lips, but do neither mourn for it, nor hate it, nor turn from it with their Hearts.

Some pray for that they would not have.

Some hear the Word, but will not do it.

Some love in word and tongue, but not in deed and in truth.

Some faſhion themſelves according to this world, yet would not be thought to be of the world.

Some Dedicate and Devote their Children to God, to the ſervice of that one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and when they have ſo done, they alienate them from his ſervice to the ſervice of the World, Fleſh, and Devil, breeding them up in Idleneſs, Pride, and Wantonneſs. Never, or never to any purpoſe minding them of their Baptiſ-

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mal Covenant and Engagements, to be wholy and only the Lords.

Some neglect relative Duty,(as thou Conſcience knoweſt very well.)

Are not ſome Husbands bitter to their Wives, and ſome Wives diſobedient to their Husbands?

Do not ſome Parents provoke their Children to wrath? and do not ſome Children diſhonour their Parents?

Do not ſome Maſters deny that which is juſt and equal to their Servants? and are not ſome Servants unfaithful to their Maſters? Do thou not know all this to be true, Conſcience? Doubtleſs thou doeſt, and doubtleſs thou doeſt often nip and twinge them for it. But good Conſcience make them feel, make them ſmart, let them not go on in peace, diſturb them, haunt them continually, tell them their own, and take a fit time and ſeaſon for it.

My Reader doth frequently, or ſometimes at leaſt, hear Sermons. Sermons of the neceſſity of the New-birth, Faith,

Re-

Repentance, Holineſs. Take this opportunity, Conſcience, of telling him the truth. Say to him, heareſt thou what the Preacher ſays? hath he not clearly proved the neceſſity of New birth, Faith, Repentance, Holineſs unto life Eternal. What wilt thou do, Man, Woman? Thou art not New-born, thou haſt not believed nor repented, thou art not Holy. Sure thou canſt not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Joh. 3. 3. *Sure thou muſt be damned,* Mat. 16. 16. *Sure thou muſt periſh,* Luke 13. 3. *thou canſt not ſee the Lord to thy comfort, in that unholy eſtate thou art now in* Heb. 12. 14.

My Reader prays conſtantly, or ſometimes at leaſt, and ſays, Lord give me a better Heart, a new Heart, a clean Heart, a ſoft Heart, a ſingle Heart. Lord, write thy Law in my Heart, plant thy Fear in my Heart, put thy Spirit into me, cauſe me to walk in thy Statutes. Now Conſcience, tell him the truth; ſay to him, Thou draweſt nigh

nigh to God with thy lips, but thy heart is far from him. Thy Lip doth ask theſe things of God, but thy heart dos not deſire them; thou art well enough ſatisfied and contented, though thou be denied.

My Reader is ſometimes buſy in his Calling: Conſcience go to him and ſay, O how buſy thou art for back and belly! what proviſion makeſt thou for thy ſoul?

My Reader is ſometimes at a Feaſt, or at his own Table: go to him Conſcience, and ſay, O how ſweet this meat is to thy taſte! when ſhall the Word of God, and the meat indeed, and the drink indeed, be as ſweet?

My Reader is ſometimes in a Tavern, Ale-houſe, or Coffee-houſe. Conſcience, when he has done his neceſſary buſineſs there, go to him and ſay, Is not thy Family or Cloſet, a fitter place for thee to be in?

Sometimes he is walking in the fields: Conſcience, go to him and ask him what he is meditating on, and put him in

mind

mind of Iſaac's *practice*, Gen. 24. 6.

My Reader is ſometimes ſick: go to him, Conſcience, and ſay, This is the juſt hand of God upon thee: and bid him take his Bible and read Jer. 4. 18.

Sometimes my Reader takes Phyſick: go to him, Conſcienee, and ſay to him, When wilt thou be at ſo much coſt for thy ſoul? when wilt thou ſpare ſo much time from thy buſineſs for thy ſoul? when wilt thou keep thy Chamber a day or two for thy ſouls health?

Poſſibly my Reader hath lately been recovered out of a dangerous fit of ſickneſs: go to him, Conſcience, and put him in mind of his ſick-bed prayers and purpoſes, and ſay to him, Sin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee.

Conſcience, have but a very little patience more, & I have done. Some of my Readers, thou knoweſt, have lain under the means of Grace a long time Unconverted; would I could perſwade thee to force them to read Heb. 6. 7, 8. Jer. 6. 29. Ezek. 24. 13, 14. Mat. 23. 37, 38.

Luke

Luke 19.41,42. 2 Cor. 13.5. *and not let them be quiet until they have muſed a while on each. Conſcience, I am in care and fear about my Readers, leſt that dreadful Meſſage be ſent to them, that once was ſent to* Iſrael *of old,* Iſa. 6.9,10. *with* Rom. 11.18. *I beſeech thee, Conſcience, ſuffer them not to eat, drink, or ſleep in quiet, until they have fixed their thoughts a while on this Meſſage after the reading of it. Conſcience, I am out of hopes of my Readers welfare, unleſs thou be the more vigilant, diligent, and faithful in doing thy office. Wherefore I beſeech thee, nay I charge thee, as once* Paul *charged* Timothy, 2 Tim. 4.1. *before God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom; preach the Word to my Reader, be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon; Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort him, and continue thy ſpeech to him (as once* Paul *did to his Hearers,* Act. 20. 7.) *until midnight rather than fail of*

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prevailing with him. There are a few other Scriptures, which I deſire my Reader might peruſe, viz. 1 Sam. 2. 25. 2 Chro. 25. 16. Pro. 29. 1. *But Conſcience, if thou wilt not by earneſt and continual urging compel him, he will not beſtow the time, nor take the paine to do it. In hope thou willt be faithful to my Reader, I ſhall add no more save only the promiſe of my prayers that thou mayſt be ſo.*

SER.

SERMON I.

27.

JOB 27. 6.

My Righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let it go: my Heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live.

MY *Righteouſneſs I hold faſt.* His Friends would have robb'd him of it, would have perſwaded him out of it, would have argued and diſputed him out of it, but you ſhall not do it ſaith *Job*; I ſtand up in the defence of it, I hold it faſt, I will not let it go: Say what you will, do what you can, I will maintain my Integrity, I am not an Hypocrite as you would have me think I am; I am not an unrighteous man as you would ſpeak me to be, and as you would have me take my ſelf to be; no, my Righteouſneſs I will hold faſt, I will

not let it go; pull while you will, I will hold it faſt. Take we up the like Reſolution: there are ſome that pretend to be friends, pretend friendſhip and kindneſs, but act the part of *Job*'s friends here. Oh how many are there that would ſpoil us of our Righteouſneſs! the World, the Fleſh and the Devil, pull to take it away; Hold we our Reſolution not to let it go. Should I let it go, (ſaith *Job*) my Heart would reproach me, would upbraid me; my Conſcience would accuſe me of wrong done to my ſelf, which is worſe than doing wrong to others. It is bad to wrong others, much worſe to wrong our ſelves: therefore he is reſolved, *My Heart ſhall not reproach me, no not ſo long as I live.* In which words you have *Job*'s holy reſolution, *My Heart ſhall not reproach me.* My Heart, that is, my Conſcience, for ſo Heart is to be underſtood; *If our*

1 *John* 3.20,21. *heart condemn us, God*

is

is greater than our heart: And if our heart condemn us not, &c. that is, our Conſcience. So that by Heart you muſt here underſtand Conſcience. *Conſcience!* Is there any ſuch thing in the World? Sure one would think that Conſcience had been dead long ago, and that there was no Conſcience now alive in the World. But (Sirs) it will have a Reſurrection aſſure your ſelves, for it is of an Immortal Nature; and though it may ſeem to die, it will have a real Reſurrection. Sleep is the image of Death, and Conſcience may for awhile be aſleep, but as ſure as ever thou didſt awake when thou waſt aſleep, Conſcience will awake ere long: and when it ſhall awake, it will make you look about. *My Conſcience ſhall not reproach me*, ſhall not upbraid, ſhall not accuſe me of any wrong done to my ſelf, nor of any omiſſion of what is my Duty, nor of any commiſſion of what is

Tranſgreſſion, it ſhall not accuſe me, either for omitting what God hath commanded, (and God hath commanded me to preſerve my own Integrity, and to ſeek my own peace and quiet;) or accuſe me for committing what God hath forbidden. God hath forbidden me the wronging of my ſelf, and Conſcience ſhall not accuſe me for doing what God hath forbidden, ſo long as I live. Hitherto his Conſcience accuſed him not. O Excellent *Job!* A man more righteous than his Neighbour. In deed he was one that had the Commendation of God himſelf; no wonder he doth ſtand up in his own juſtification, being a perſon that had Gods ſo great Commendation: *Job* 1. 1. *There was a man in the Land of* Uz, *whoſe name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright, one that feared God and eſchewed evil.* And a further Commendation the Lord gave him, *ver.* 8. *Haſt thou not conſidered my Servant Job,*

Job, that there is none like him in the earth? &c. No wonder that he ſtands upon his own Juſtification. Hitherto I have ſo lived that my Conſcience cannot accuſe me, and he was reſolved ſo to live. I will have a care (whatever I ſuffer) to have Conſcience on my ſide; I will have Conſcience to be my Friend, I will not do any thing that ſhall occaſion Conſcience to be my Foe; For I were better to have all the World, yea if there were ten thouſand Worlds, it were better for me to have them all to be my mortal enemies, than to have Conſcience to be mine enemy.

Now it will be needful to conſider what Conſcience is that is ſo great a Friend or Foe: it will be the beſt Friend, or the worſt Enemy, according as your carriage towards God and Man ſhall be. I ſhall ſhew,

1. *What Conſcience is.*
2. *About what it is imployed.*
3. *How it is imployed.*

And then when I have ſo done, I ſhall tell you and prove it, that it ſhould be your greateſt care ſo to live, that Conſcience may not reproach you whileſt you live; and then give you reaſons of it, and then Apply it.

I. General. *What Conſcience is.*

Briefly, Conſcience is a Mans Judgement of himſelf, *i.e.* Of his Eſtate and Actions: Or thus, if you will; *Conſcience is a Power of the Soul; for the Soul is endowed with Noble Powers and Faculties, Underſtanding, Conſcience, Memory, Will and Affections: and Conſcience is not the leaſt of them. I ſay, Conſcience is a Power of the Soul taking notice and bearing witneſs of all a mans Thoughts, Words and Actions; and as it finds them, either to agree or not agree with the Rule, it accuſes or excuſes, abſolves or condemns, comforts or torments.* This is Conſcience. Do you think there is any ſuch In-

Inhabitant in you? It may be some have taken no notice of any such Inhabitant in the House of their Soul, whether there be any such Power of the Soul or no. I say it again, Conscience is a Power of the Soul, taking notice, and bearing witness, (it takes notice that it may bear witness) of all a mans Thoughts, Words and Actions; and as it finds his Thoughts, Words, or Actions, to be either agreeing or not agreeing with the Rule, so it doth excuse or accuse, absolve or condemn, comfort or torment. This is Conscience.

1. It is a Power of the Soul; it is called Heart 1 *John* 3 30, *For if our heart condemn us, &c.* and *Eccles.* 7. 22. *For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth, &c.* It is called likewise the Spirit of a man, *Prov.* 18. 14. *The Spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?*

2. Conſcience is a Power of the Soul taking notice; it is a moſt curious Obſerver. Conſcience is very quick ſighted. It is continually prying, though we do not obſerve and take notice of it; yet ſo it is. What is ſaid of God *Pſalm* 132.3,4. is true of his Deputy: Who is that? It is Conſcience. Conſcience is no mean thing, it is Gods Deputy, and what is ſaid of God in that ploce is true of Conſcience: *Thou compaſſeſt my path and my lying down, and thou art acquainted with all my ways, for there is not a word in my mouth, but lo, O Lord, thou knoweſt it altogether: Thou haſt beſet me behind and before.* So that a man cannot ſtir but God ſeeth and Conſcience ſeeth, and knoweth and taketh notice of it; and one would wonder how Conſcience will revive what was done ſeven years, and three times ſeven years ago. Conſcience will whiſper in your ear, this was in your heart, and this was in your tongue,

tongue, and this was in your hands, this was thought by you, that was ſpoken by you, and that was done by you; that which we had utterly forgotten. How freſh many years after doth Conſcience bring it to mind? Conſcience took notice of it, and did well obſerve it. Thus Conſcience is a Power of the Soul taking notice.

3. And bearing witneſs, it taketh notice that it may bare witneſs, if it ſhould not take notice it could not bear witneſs. Can a man bear witneſs of that which he never knew, which he never ſaw, nor heard? *Rom.* 2.14. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of the Gentiles, ſaith, *Having not the Law, they do by nature the things contained in the Law: theſe having not the Law, are a Law unto themſelves, which ſhew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their Conſcience alſo bearing witneſs.* It is an old Proverbial ſpeech, *Conſcience is a thouſand*

Witnesses; nay it's more than a thousand or ten thousand Witnesses; that one Witness is enough to cast us. If Conscience be a Witness, there is no need of any further Witness. As they said of Christ, *What need we any further witness, we have it from his own mouth?* So will the Lord say to the Sinner, What need any further Witness his own Conscience is witness? You read of the Testimony of Conscience, sometimes it is for, and sometimes against.

1. It is sometimes for us, as 2 *Cor.* 1.12. *This is our rejoycing* (saith the Apostle) *the testimony of our Conscience, that in all simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the World.*

2. And sometimes against us, and then 'tis a Hell above ground, a Hell on this side Hell.

3. It further follows, that Conscience is a Power of the Soul taking no-

notice of, and bearing witneſs of a mans Thoughts, Words and Actions, ſo that the Thoughts ſhall not eſcape Conſciences obſervation, nor ſhall a Word eſcape Conſciences hearing, nor a Work Conſciences recording. And as Conſcience finds the Thoughts, Words or Actions, either agreeing or not agreeing with the Rule, it will excuſe or accuſe. Conſcience cannot be a Witneſs of our Thoughts, Words and Actions, whether they be according to the Rule, or contrary to it, whether they agree with the Rule or warp from it, unleſs it be a ſtrict Obſerver. And if it find our Thoughts, Words and Actions to agree with the Rule, it excuſeth; if not to agree with the Rule, it accuſeth: *Rom.* 2. 15. *Their thoughts in the mean while accuſing or excuſing one another.*

4. And then it follows, *abſolving or condemning.* For the truth is Conſcience is a Judge, a Deputy Judge, which

which God hath ſet up and given Power to, that according as it finds Thoughts, Words and Actions, to be according to Rule, or not according to Rule, it may either acquit or condemn.

5. And then it comforteth or tormenteth alſo, as it findeth thoughts, words and actions, either to agree or not to agree with the Rule, 2 *Cor.* 1.12. *This is our rejoycing in the Teſtimony of our Conſcience*; there is the comfort of Conſcience. And *Mark* 9. 44. *It is a Worm that never dieth*; there is the torment of it. Thus you ſee Conſcience is a Power of the Soul, taking notice and bearing Witneſs, of all a mans thoughts, words and actions; and as it finds them either agreeing or not agreeing with the Rule, it excuſeth, or accuſeth, abſolveth or condemneth, comforteth or tormenteth. This is called Conſcience. It is called Conſcience ſome think becauſe it is a Knowledge with others.

Pray

Pray obſerve, God knows, Angels know, Devils know, Men know, and all theſe witneſs, and Conſcience knows and witneſſeth with them. 1. God knows *Job* 16. 19. *My witneſs is in Heaven, my record is on high.* There is one in Heaven that knows, and one in Heaven that can witneſs; though the husband doth not know, though the wife doth not know, and father and friend doth not know, yet God knows, and there is one on earth knows, and that is Conſcience. *God is my witneſs*, ſaith *Paul*, *Rom.* 1. 9. God doth know it, and can witneſs it. *All things are naked and open to him with whom we have to do*, *Heb.* 4. 13. It is a notable Scripture, *Hoſ.* 7. 2. *And they conſider not in their hearts, that I remember all their wickedneſs.* Whoever forgets it, and though they themſelves forget it, yet I remember it well enough. They do not conſider that I remember all their wickedneſs, their own doings have

have beſet them about, they are all before my face, even what is not before the Husbands face and the Wifes face. God knows what things are acted behind one anothers backs; all is before Gods Face, he knows it, and takes notice of it. 2. Angels know it too; the Angels are Miniſtring Spirits about ſome: they are imployed here on Earth, though we take no notice of it. They are in our Congregatio s and Meetings, and they obſerve how we carry our ſelves there. *For this cauſe ought the Woman to have power on her head, becauſe of the Angels*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 11. 10. *i.e.* the Woman is to be modeſt in the Congregation becauſe of the Angels. The Lord return Modeſty home again, for Modeſty ſeems to be baniſhed from among us. But do Angels know? do the good Angels know? Yes, when we do well the good Angels rejoyce: if a Sinner be

Pſal. 139. *begin.*

be converted, if the loſt Sheep be found, there is joy among the Angels; therefore they know it. *Luke* 15. 7, 10. 3. The bad Angels know too, they go about as Obſervers. You cannot go to the Congregation, but the Devil makes one there. The Sower goes out to ſow the good Seed, then comes the Enemy, the Devil, and ſteals it away, *Matth.* 13.19. He alſo goes about as a roaring Lion every where, 1 *Pet.* 5.8. He goes to and fro in the earth, and walks up and down in it, *Job* 1.7. obſerving what People do; for he is the Accuſer of the Brethren, and he will when time ſerves remember people of what they have done, though done by his inſtigation and temptation: ſee *Zech.* 3 1. Poor Creatures are tempted to deſtroy themſelves; well, God delivers them, and now they are aſhamed. O what a ſhame is this (ſaith the Devil) that thou haſt attempted to deſtroy thy ſelf?

ſelf? how canſt thou look any body in the face without ſhame? go and deſtroy thy ſelf. This was the caſe of a poor creature that I have twice ſpoken with; once ſhe attempted to drown her ſelf; I ſpake with her, and gave her the beſt counſel I could: ſhe anſwered me, I am aſhamed, I am aſhamed, I cannot go about any thing. Not many days after ſhe went into a Wood to cut her own Throat, but God delivered her: But this poor Creature is ſtill under diſcontent, the Devil doth remember her. I beſeech you conſider how many Witneſſes there are of all that you do; you think to ſin in the dark, and to do it ſo that no eye ſhall ſee you you think to draw the Curtains, and then none can ſee you; but you deceive your ſelves, it is Noon Day with God ſtill, and ſo it is with Angels, and with the Devil too; there is nothing hid from them. 4. Men know, they are our Obſervers. Some have their eyes in their

their heads, and ſee that which ſhould make their eyes weep and trickle down with tears, and if they have any Zeal for God, the ſight of their Eyes will affect their Hearts. And beſides this Conſcience alſo knows, and therefore called Conſcience (as ſome think) becauſe it knows with others. It knoweth with God, with Angels, with Devils, and knows it to be all true which God lays to our charge, and what the Devil lays to our charge; ſo that Conſcience is a Knowledge together with others. *Rom.*9.1. *My Conſcience bearing me witneſs.* My Conſcience co-witneſſing, my Conſcience witneſſing together with God; God knows it, and doth witneſs it; and my Conſcience knows it, and doth witneſs it; and my Conſcience together with me knows it.

There is a double Act of the Underſtanding; there is a Direct Act whereby we know a thing, and there is

is a Reflect Act whereby we know that we know it. And this is the Action of Conſcience. *Iſa.* 59. 12. *For our tranſgreſſions are multiplied before thee, and our ſins they teſtifie againſt us; for our tranſgreſſions are with us, and as for our iniquities we know them, we know that we have ſinned.* So that Conſcience is a recoiling or a reflexion of the Soul upon it ſelf; according to that of *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 4.

II. *General.* I come in the next place to ſhew about what Conſcience is imploy'd. It is imploy'd about the whole man and all his actions. It hath a Commiſſion thus to employ it ſelf about the underſtanding, how that doth act, about the memory to obſerve how that doth act, about the will how that doth act, and the Affections how they do act, it is imployed to obſerve whether the man be ſanctified or not, and it is imployed about his actions whether they be good or bad, about our actions towards God or Man, towards

wards our ſelves or others. And it is imployed about every thing that is either a Sin or a Duty. Conſcience is imployed to obſerve how you eat and drink, it is imployed to obſerve how you dreſs and habit your ſelves, how you buy and ſell, and deal and trade in the World; it is imployed to obſerve how you read the Scripture, pray in your Family, in your Clozet, and in the Congregation, how you ſanctifie the Sabbath, receive Sacraments, how you ſpend your time, how long you ly a Bed in a morning, how late you ſet up at night, and about what; to obſerve how you carry your ſelves alone, and how you carry your ſelves in Company, to obſerve what you do in the Streets, or in the Field, in this place or in the other place, in this Company or in the other Company; it goeth along with you, and it will never leave you. God help me to mind this. I hope you will make the ſame prayer for your ſelves, that I make for my ſelf.

III.

III. *General.* How Conſcience is imployed. From the Deſcription of Conſcience which I have given you, you may underſtand that Conſcience hath ſeveral Offices, the Office of a Notary or Regiſter, the Office of a Witneſs or Accuſer, the Office of a Judge or a Condemner, the Office of a Comforter or a Tormenter; Conſcience is imployed in ſuch Offices as theſe are, and Conſcience will firſt or laſt be faithful in the executing of them, and it will do its Office to purpoſe.

1. It is imployed as a Notary or Regiſter to write down all we do; to write it down as with the point of a Diamond, to Book it down, and Seal it up, that it may come to light again.

2. it is imployed as an Accuſer when we do amiſs, when we warp from the Rule.

3. It is imployed as a Judge, to paſs ſentence of life or death. Oh, Sirs,

Sirs, how many poor ſouls are condemned by their own hearts? Their own Conſciences tell them, Thou art a Damned Creature, thou art an undone ſoul: it may be Conſcience as yet doth not ſet in Judgment, it is not Seſſions or Aſſizes time with you, it may be it is adjourned and put off to a longer time. But aſſure your ſelves the time will come, the time is at hand.

4. Conſcience is alſo imployed as a Comforter, as an Acquitter and Abſolver if we do well, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *This is our rejoycing, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity,* &c. *we have had our converſation in the world.* What greater rejoycing than this? when Conſcience ſhall acquit me in the preſence of God, when Conſcience ſhall be able to ſay as *Hezekiah, Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight.* Oh what

what a comfort will it be when Conſcience ſhall reflect upon its believing in Chriſt, upon its confeſſion of ſin, repentance and tears, ſighs and groans for ſin. This is my rejoicing, the teſtimony of my Conſcience; that I have been alone in a corner in my Cloſet with tears in mine eyes, and ſorrow in my heart, that I have rolled my ſelf on Chriſt, and caſt all my care upon him.

5. Then as a Tormentor Conſcience is imployed. When Conſcience ſhall recoil and thus reflect upon a man. When thou ſhouldſt have been in thy Clozet thou waſt here or there in the Street or in the Field, in the Coffee Houſe or Taverns: when thou ſhouldſt have been with God alone, thou haſt been elſwhere. Thou couldſt lye down and riſe up without having God before thine Eyes: thou couldſt eat and drink without fear and without rule, and buy and ſell, and habit thy ſelf without fear. There is as much

much danger in habiting and dreſſing our ſelves as in eating and drinking; O what if this dreſs ſhould be a ſnare, what if this ſhould occaſion the committing of Adultery, *He that looks upon a Woman to luſt after her*, (ſaith Chriſt) *hath committed Adultery with her already in his heart.* Saith one, There is a fine clear skin, and ſo ſaith a ſecond, and a third; but do you know what temptation may lye in a naked skin: the Lord help us to take heed of it. I would commend you a little Book, it is but 3 pence price, it is called *The Hairy Comet*, very fit for an Hairy Age. This is indeed an Hairy Age; God deliver us from falſe Hearts, for we can ſee almoſt nothing but falſe Heads every where. Aſſure your ſelves, Conſcience will have a bout with men for this another day.

Conſcience will not let this go unobſerved; Conſcience doth write down this, and will hereafter find a time

time to read it to you: It may be the Wife will ſay I muſt pleaſe my Husband, and the Husband will ſay I muſt pleaſe my Wife. But have a care I beſeech you to pleaſe Conſcience that it may not be againſt you another day. See that Conſcience be for you, and that Conſcience may have no cauſe to upbraid you, and torment you another day. Let *Jobs* care be your care; let not Conſcience reproach you ſo long as you live. I beſeech you earneſtly, let it be your great care to have *A Conſcience void of offence towards God and towards Man*; towards your ſelves and others. And if you ſo do, you will have no cauſe to repent your being here to hear this Leſſon.

SER-

SERMON II.

JOB 27.6.

My Righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let it go: my Heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live.

THis was *Job*'s reſolution, why ſhould it not be ours? Thoſe that have felt the Reproaches of Conſcience once, would be loth to feel them a ſecond time. The very bruit Beaſts, when once they have been either in the mire, or in the fire, will take heed how they come there again. You can hardly force them into a Bog wherein they have been mired, they will turn this way, and that way, and run back again upon you, rather than run into the mire wherein they have been already. *A wounded Conſcience*

who can bear? They that have felt that wound, and have gotten it heal'd, will take heed how they make another.

The Propoſition I gave you was this; *It ſhould be our greateſt care ſo to live, that our conſciences may have no occaſion to accuſe or reproach us while we live.* Some do ſo live that their neighbours can have no occaſion to reproach them; ſome there are that ſo live, that the very worſt have a good word for them; I have known ſome that have been ſo unblameable, of ſuch a ſweet diſpoſition, ſo kind and courteous to all, and have lived ſo inoffenſively, that the worſt have had a good word for them. But where are they that have or do carry themſelves ſo, that their Conſciences have no occaſion to accuſe them, or to reproach them? Commend me to that perſon if you can. I have already ſhewed you what Conſcience is, and about what it is imployed, and how it is imployed.

I

I come now to the Proof of the Doctrine. This was *Jobs* care you ſee; he was reſolved upon it, that he would ſo walk and ſo watch that Conſcience might have no occaſion to reproach him. And hath *Job* no Fellows? yes many; the Scripture ſpeaketh of ſuch as have made it their care ſo to walk, that Conſcience might have no juſt occaſion to reproach them. *David* was one of them, as appears by what he ſaith *Pſ.* 16.8. *Pſ.* 119. 3, 112, 113. although there was a time when he gave Conſcience too great occaſion to reproach him, and his Conſcience did reproach him to purpoſe at laſt. Ah poor *David!* what broken bones had he? This was *Hezekiah*'s care, elſe he could not have had the teſtimony of his Conſcience for him as he had; *Remember* (ſaith he, *Iſa.* 38.3.) *O Lord how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight*. Perfect heart, that is, an upright

heart; perfection, not of degrees, but of parts, is there to be underſtood. There are many ſuch other places in Scripture, as in the Book of *Pſalms*, *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright*; where you find one word to explain the other. This alſo was *Paul*'s care, elſe could not he have had the teſtimony of his Conſcience as he had. *This is our rejoycing*, (ſaith he) *the teſtimony of our Conſcience, &c.* 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. it was *Pauls* exerciſe, *Acts* 24. 16. *And herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of offence, toward God and toward Man.*

Reaſon I.

The grounds and reaſons of it follow. One reaſon why we ſhould take all poſſible care that Conſcience may have no occaſion to reproach us is, becauſe if occaſion be given; theſe reproches are unavoidable; I ſay, theſe reproaches, vexations and accuſations of Conſcience will be unavoidable; there is no eſcaping from them: we may

may give occaſion to others, and poſſibly there may be ſome avoiding that which we give occaſion of; but here is no avoiding or eſcaping in this caſe. Conſcience may be aſleep, and Conſcience may ſay nothing a great while but at laſt it will awake and do its office, in accuſing and in judging, condemning and tormenting. *David*'s Conſcience was aſleep for a great while, but afterwards *Nathan* cometh to him from the Lord, and rouſeth Conſcience, and then Conſcience ſet moſt violently upon him; as appears by *Pſ.* 51. where he complaineth of broken bones, and prayeth that the bones which were broken might rejoyce. So *Joſeph*'s Brethren, they heard nothing of Conſcience a great while, but at laſt Conſcience twinges them, at laſt Conſcience put out his envenomed ſting; (no ſuch ſting as the ſting of Conſcience) at laſt Conſcience taketh them by the throat, *Gen.* 42. 21. *And they ſaid one to ano-*

ther, we are verily guilty concerning [*the bloud of*] *our Brother, &c.* though men do with the Harlot for a great while wipe their mouths, and ſay, What evil have we done? As *Joſeph*'s Brethren, they ſold their Brother *Joſeph*: Conſcience ſaid never a word to them, let them alone a great while: they came and told their Father a lie, and Conſcience ſaid never a word to them, when they told their Father that *Joſeph* was ſlain: they ſaw their Father mourning as if he were going down into the Grave, Conſcience ſaith nothing all the while: a Famine cometh upon the Land, Conſcience yet ſaith nothing to them: at laſt they come down into *Egypt*, there they meet with hard uſage, and are in danger of impriſonment. Now Conſcience beginneth to rouze up it ſelf like a Lyon, to tear and devour: then they cry out, *Verily we are guilty concerning the bloud of our Brother.* You ſee Conſcience had an awakening time

time, though it had been aſleep; the Morning came for its awakening. So *Judas*'s Conſcience was aſleep for a great while: and one would wonder that it ſhould ever be ſo faſt aſleep as was, *Mat.* 26. 15. you may read there ſome paſſages of it. He goeth to the Chief Prieſts and maketh a Bargain: *What will you give me, and I will deliver Jeſus to you? and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of Silver:* there he maketh a bargain for a little Silver to ſell his Lord and Maſter, and to betray innocent bloud: Conſcience ſaith never a word to him. Further, he ſought for opportunity to betray Chriſt, yet Conſcience ſaith nothing to him, v. 21. when he was come into the preſence of his Maſter, he came with the Diſciples to the Paſſover, yet Conſcience ſaith nothing to him all the while: when he was at the Paſſover and eating, Chriſt telleth his Diſciples that one of them ſhould betray him, yet *Judas*'s

Conſcience ſaith never a word to him, but letteth him alone all this while. Nay further, when the Diſciples at theſe words were exceeding ſorrowful, and began to ſay every one of them, *Lord is it I?* yet *Judas*'s Conſcience ſaith nothing to him. And Chriſt ſaid, *He that dippeth his hand with me in the diſh, the ſame ſhall betray me:* yet his Conſcience was aſleep all this while. Further, ver. 24. Chriſt pronounceth a Wo to that man by whom he ſhould be betrayed; yet the denunciation of that Wo did not awaken *Judas*'s Conſcience; *Wo to him; it had been good for that man he had never been born.* It is matter of admiration and amazement, that his Conſcience ſhould be ſo faſt aſleep; the Devil entred into him, and rocked Conſcience aſleep, till he might be ſure to do him miſchief enough; ver. 25. Then *Judas* which betrayed him, put the queſtion and ſaid, *Maſter, is it I?* Methinks his Conſcience

ence ſhould have flown in his face like a Maſtiff. Nay further ſaith Chriſt, *Thou haſt ſaid*; thou art the man: and yet for all this *Judas*'s Conſcience was not awake. This is indeed matter of admiration, that a mans Conſcience ſhould be ſo faſt aſleep. But how many Inſtances of ſuch ſleepy Conſciences doth this very age afford? But doth *Judas*'s Conſcience ſleep always? No, *Then Judas which betrayed him, when he ſaw that Jeſus was condemned, he brought again the 30 pieces of Silver to the Chief Prieſts and ſaid, I have ſinned, in that I have betrayed Innocent blood.* But miſerable comforters were thoſe Chriſt-Buyers, they bought him to be crucified; they did reply to him when he ſaid, *I have ſinned; What is that to us? ſee thou to that. And he caſt down the thirty pieces of Silver in the Temple, and went and hanged himſelf.* And now his Conſcience was ſo awake that it would not ſuffer him to live. I aſſure you

howſoever Conſcience may be aſleep for a great while, yet the time will come that Conſcience will do it's office; and therefore it doth greatly concern us to take great care that Conſcience may have no occaſion to reproach us. O happy *Judas* if thou hadſt never made a bargain to ſell thy Maſter and hadſt never ſought opportunity to betray him! O happy, if thou hadſt never accompanied the Band of Souldiers, that came to apprehend him! But he came along with the Band of Souldiers, and gave them the Sign, *The Man whom I ſhall kiſs is the Man, hold him faſt:* yet Conſcience did not reproach him. But let men do what they can to ſtop the mouth of Conſcience, it will ſpeak at laſt, and they will be biting words. Carnal Reaſonings cannot ſtop it, Carnal Pleaſures cannot bribe it, nor any variety of diverſions ſilence it. *Cain* you know, he was quiet a while, *Gen.* 4. 13. But after a while *Cain*'s Con-

Conſcience did reproach him, would not let him alone. *Belſhazzar*, he is merry awhile with his Courtiers and Companions in drinking Wine in Bowls, but after he falls a trembling, and his knees ſmote one againſt the other, and he grew pale when he ſaw the hand writing on the wall. Conſcience will ſee an hand writing not on the wall, but in this book. I have ſpoken with ſome poor Souls, that could ſay, this word is againſt me, and that word is againſt me; there are words enough in this Book againſt you. Conſcience will one day awake and reproach and will not be bribed, will not have its mouth ſtopt. This is one great reaſon why we ſhould be careful ſo to live, that Conſcience may not reproach us while we live, for the reproaches of Conſcience are unavoidable.

Reaſon II.

Another reaſon why we ſhould take all poſſible care that Conſcience may

may have no occaſion to reproach us, is becauſe the reproaches of Conſcience are *Intolerable*, there will be no bearing of them. *A wounded Spirit who can bear?* None are able to bear it. Many inſtances might be given; you may read *Job* 7. 13, 14, 15. *When I ſay, my bed ſhall comfort me, my couch ſhall eaſe my complaint; then thou ſcareſt me with dreams, and terrifieſt me with viſions. ſo that my ſoul chuſeth ſtrangling, and death rather than life.* Oh Sirs, what a caſe will the terrours and accuſations of Conſcience bring the poor creature into? *Job* 10. 1. *My ſoul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon my ſelf, &c. Pſalm* 32. 3, 4. *When I kept ſilence my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day, &c.* All this was occaſioned through the reproaches of Conſcience. I might add, *Prov.* 12. 25. *Heavineſs in the heart of a man maketh a man to ſtoop.* I have known thoſe that have been bowed to-

together by reaſon of the agonies of Conſcience. I knew one, at whoſe Eyes and Ears Bloud hath guſhed forth by reaſon of the Agonies of Conſcience. *Pro.* 17. 22. *A merry heart doth good like a medicine, but a broken ſpirit dries the bones.* You know *Judas* did chuſe rather to die than endure it. *Bilney* and *Baynham* (after they had abjured) felt ſuch pangs, ſuch a Hell in their Conſciences, till they had openly profeſſed their ſorrow for it, as they would not have felt again for all the world. *Daniel* choſe rather to be caſt into the Lions Den, than to carry a Lion in his boſom, *viz.* an enraged Conſcience. *Richard* the Third was a terror to himſelf after he had murdered his two innocent Nephews. *Charles* the Ninth of *France*, after that bloudy Maſſacre by which his Conſcience was enraged, could not endure to be awakened in the night, without Muſick or ſome other diverſion. Thus much

much for the Reaſons of the Point: I procced to the

Application.

Uſe 1. *Of Reproof.* The firſt Uſe ſhall be for Reproof of thoſe that take no ſuch care to avoid the Reproaches of Conſcience, but do that which will be caſt by Conſcience as a Reproach upon them another day. How do ſome for many years together heap up Fuel to keep a Fire burning within them? No ſooner is ſome Fuel ſpent, but there is more Fuel heapt on again; freſh ſins are committed, and after a while theſe ſins come to remembrance, and ſet the Fire a burning. It may be a man may weather it out a little, but then more ſins come to light, and that ſets the Fire a burning again, and ſo there is no end. Conſcience hath not forgotten any thing done many years ago, but remembers it as if it had been done but yeſterday. You that cannot endure to be reproached, that can-

cannot endure to hear others reproached, that cannot bear the reproaches of Men, when as it may be they reproach wrongfully; how will you bear (not the falſe, but) true Acculations of Conſcience? Men may reproach falſly, but Conſcience will reproach truly. Men may reproach thee, and yet thine own Conſcience mey clear thee when they accuſe thee; but if Conſcience reproach thee, then who ſhall clear thee? Men may grow weary or aſhamed of reproaching thee, but if Conſcience reproach thee, will that grow weary or aſhamed? No, never. If ſome men reproach us, others may clear us: but if Conſcience reproach us, who then can clear us? This ſhould humble us, that we have given Conſcience occaſion to reproach us. *2Sam.* 24. 1. If you have not taken this care to avoid the Reproaches of Conſcience, it will reproach you as it did *David*, whoſe

Heart

Heart ſmote him after he had numbered the People: and *David* ſaid unto the Lord, *I have ſinned greatly in that I have done; I beſeech thee (O Lord) to take away the iniquity of thy ſervant, for I have done very fooliſhly.* *David*'s Heart ſmote him, now his Conſcience ſmites and cuts him to the very Heart. Though his Conſcience were quiet a great while, *Pſal.* 73. 21, 22 yet afterwards he thus complains; *Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins: ſo fooliſh was I and ignorant; I was as a Beaſt before thee.* If you neglect Conſcience when it points with the finger, and gives direction; aſſure your ſelves, Conſcience will have a time to ſmite with the fiſt, and to give correction, and then there will be no enduring of it: as it was with *David* when his Heart ſmote him, *Pſal.* 69. 7. If ſhame covered *David*'s Face when men reproached him, Oh what ſhame will co-

cover our Faces when Conſcience ſhall reproach us! *Reproach hath broken my heart,* (ſaith he) *and I am full of heavineſs. I looked for ſome to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none.* Ver. 20. This will be your caſe and your complaint when Conſcience ſhall reproach you. *Reproach hath broken my heart. They gave me Gall for meat, and Vinegar to drink*; ſaith he, Ver. 21. Conſcience will give Gall and Vinegar to us, unleſs ſome courſe be taken for the quieting of it; if you make it not your care ſo to live, that Conſcience may not reproach you. To be able to ſay, *For Gods ſake I have born reproach, Pſal.* 69. 7. will be a comfort: but if for our Luſts ſake we bear reproach, what a Torment will that be? When Conſcience ſhall ſay, This is for the ſake of that proud Luſt, this is for the ſake of that drunken Luſt, that wanton Luſt of thine; this is for that Paſſion of thine, that froward

froward and fretful Spirit of thine: when Conſcience ſhall ſay, This is for the ſake of ſuch a Luſt which thou didſt indulge, and kept as a ſweet morſel under thy tongue, notwithſtanding the perſuaſions of all Gods Miniſters to the contrary: how wilt thou be able to bear it?

Uſe 2. *Of Exhortation.* Take care that Conſcience may not have occaſion to reproach you while you live. The Reaſons before mentioned may ſerve as Motives. The unavoidableneſs and intolerableneſs of theſe reproaches of Conſcience, theſe are Motives enough to engage us to take all care that Conſcience may not reproach us. Let it be your care to have *a Conſcience void of offence*, (*Prov.* 15.15 2 *Cor.* 1.12.) and then Conſcience inſtead of accuſing will excuſe, inſtead of condemning it will acquit you. If you hearken to the voice of Conſcience informed and guided by the Word of God, it will be

be a continual feaſt unto you, *Prov.* 15. 15. and your daily rejoycing. *This is our rejoycing,* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *the teſtimony of our Conſcience that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world.* When a man hath Conſcience on his ſide, this will be a cordial in any condition whatſoever, in a Priſon, a cordial in a Dungeon, a cordial in a ſtrange Country, and a cordial in the worſt of ſufferings that we can meet with. Keep Conſcience void of offence, and ſo live that Conſcience may not reproach you, and all will be well. How may we ſo live, you will ſay, that Conſcience may not reproach us while we live? or if we have ſo lived, that Conſcience hath had cauſe to reproach us, how may we get thoſe reproaches wiped off, and get Conſcience quiet again? That I ſhall reſerve for another opportunity.

SER-

SERMON III.

JOB 27. 6.

My Righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let it go: my Heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live.

HAving already ſhewed you what Conſcience is, and about what it is imployed, and how it is imployed, and given you ſeveral reaſons why we ſhould make it our great care ſo to live, that Conſcience may not reproach us while we live; and having made ſome Uſe of the Doctrine, I now come to reſolve two queſtions or caſes.

1. The firſt is, how may we ſo live, walk and act, and carry our ſelves, that Conſcience may have no cauſe to reproach us another day?

2. If

2. If we have ſo lived, ſo walked, ſo acted, and ſo carried our ſelves, that Conſcience hath had juſt cauſe to reproach us, and doth reproach us; what is to be done, that the reproaches of Conſcience may be wiped off, that Conſcience may be quiet, and ceaſe to accuſe and condemn, ceaſe to vex and torment? Theſe are the two caſes I am to anſwer.

Caſe 1. How may we ſo live, walk, act and carry our ſelves, that Conſcience may have no cauſe to reproach us? You ſee that *Job* did ſo live and carry himſelf, that though his friends did reproach him, his Conſcience did not reproach him; though his friends did charge him, yet his Conſcience did diſcharge him, though his friends did condemn him, yet his Conſcience did acquit him. He did ſo live, that he was able to maintain his Integrity and Uprightneſs; and doubtleſs it is not a thing impoſſible, but we do not ſet to it, we do not

not ſet about it in earneſt. If we be Chriſtians indeed, and not almoſt Chriſtians, we might ſo live as Conſcience might have no juſt cauſe to reproach us. O Sirs, Relations may reproach us, Wives may reproach Husbands, and Husbands reproach Wives, Children may reproach Parents, and Servants reproach their Maſters, and one Neighbour reproach another; but it is poſſible ſo to live, that Conſcience all this while may be at peace, and not reproach us. Poſſibly you may be ready to think and ſay within your ſelves, Would we could tell how we might ſo live, pray let us have ſome directions how we may ſo live that Conſcience may not reproach us. But before I give counſel ſhould not I know of you whether you will follow it? And in caſe you will not follow it, why ſhould I give it? Ask your ſelves therefore, if the Miniſter ſhall give us no other counſel than what God him-

himſelf gives us, ſhould not I follow it? Sirs, if I give you any other counſel than what God in his holy Word doth give you, I would intreat you not to follow it; nay, if you ſet it at naught I ſhall not he offended. Conſider what *Jethro* ſaid to *Moſes*, *Exod.* 18.23. *If thou ſhalt do this thing and God command thee ſo*; ſo ſay I. Therefore conſider whether God ſay as I ſay, whether God command you ſo; if ſo, pray take heed how you do ſet at naught the Counſel of God. Now the firſt Direction which I ſhall give you is this.

Direction I.

Set God always before you. And this will be a means ſo to live, that Conſcience may not reproach you. Aſſure your ſelves there is no time wherein Gods Back is turned, no time wherein Gods Eye is not upon you: if you can find a time when God is abſent, you may take your liberty and do what you liſt. You know of what force

force the Maſters preſence is among the ſervants; of what force the Parents preſence is among the Children to reſtrain them; of what force the preſence of a Miniſter, or a grave, ſerious and holy Chriſtian, is to reſtrain People from what otherwiſe they would take liberty to do: Sure Gods Preſence ſhould be of greater force to reſtrain us, if we did but live in the Apprehenſion thereof. O if we could but ſet God always before us, what manner of perſons ſhould we be in all holy Converſation, all holy cogitation, and in all holy communication too! *David* did ſet God always before him, and why ſhould not we do ſo too? *Pſal.* 16. 8. *I have ſet the Lord always before me.* O then it was that *David was a man after Gods own heart*; then it was that *David* was ſuch a Praying man, and ſuch a Praiſing man, and ſuch an holy and heavenly man, when he did ſet the Lord al-

ways before him. You know how perſons will carry themſelves in the ſight of Men, if they have any thing to do in the ſight of others, how they will do it; O that we could do all we do as in the ſight of God. This was the charge that was given to *Abraham* by God himſelf, *Gen.* 17. 1. *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*; that is, upright. There is no ſuch way to be upright, as to live in the Apprehenſion of the Preſence of God, and to have this always run in our thoughts, *God heareth, God ſees, and God knows.* O that this were written upon your Desks and Shop-Boards, *God ſees*; O that this were written upon your Tables, *God ſees*; O that this were written upon your Looking Glaſſes, *God ſees*; O that this were written upon all your Attire and Dreſſes, *God ſees*; and O that this were written upon your Naked Breaſts and Shoulders, *God ſees*, and upon your Faces and Foreheads

heads too. I do aſſure you (Sirs) that God does ſee you; O that you would live in the continual Apprehenſion of it. God ſees thee, God knows what all your thoughts are, what all your deſigns are, what all your ſayings and doings are. Be ever thinking, *God knows, God hears, God ſees, In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths, Prov.* 3. 6. This will make you careful to keep Gods Precepts, if in all your ways you look upon God as your Obſerver and Overſeer. This was that which made *David* careful to obſerve Gods Precepts, *Pſal.* 119. 168. *I have kept thy precepts and thy teſtimonies.* O bleſſed *David*, how didſt thou do this! He tells you in the next words, *For all my ways are before thee.* I could heartily wiſh that you would often and ſeriouſly read and conſider theſe three or four Scriptures; *Job* 34. 21, 22, *For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he*

ſees all his goings. There is no darkneſs or ſhadow of death, where the Workers of iniquity may hide themſelves. There is no hiding from God, he ſees all our goings: we cannot ſet one foot before another but God ſees it. Alas, alas, if a man do but go out of doors God ſees it, if he goes into the Field God ſees it, if he goes to other Houſes God ſees it, if he goes to his own Houſe God ſees it too. *Prov.* 15. 3. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. Prov.* 5. 2. *The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.* I deſire you once a week to read over the former part of the 139 *Pſalm*: if I ſhould deſire you to read it once a day, it would not be loſt labour. You will ſee there is no going out of the ſight and preſence of God. Verily (Sirs) to ſet God always before us, and to live in the Sight and Apprehenſion of the

Pre-

Preſence of God, this would have ſuch an influence upon our thoughts, words and works, that it would make them pleaſing to God; and if ſo, Conſcience would never reproach us for them; for Conſcience will not reproach us for doing that which is pleaſing to God. Thus much for the firſt Direction.

Direction II.

Set up Gods will revealed in his Word as the Rule of all your thoughts, words, and actions; as the rule of all you do in your general calling, and of all you do in your particular calling; as a rule of all your natural, civil, and religious actions; ſet up the Will of God revealed in his Word, as the rule of your all. Let it be the rule of your carriage towards God, of your carriage toward men, toward your ſelves, and toward others. This is Scripture direction, the Counſel which the Holy Ghoſt giveth; therefore I beſeech you ſeriouſly conſider

of it and follow it, *Pſal.* 119.6. *Then ſhall not I be aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto all thy Commandments:* and in the 9th. verſe a Queſtion is put; *Wherewithal ſhall a young man cleanſe his way?* (the anſwer followeth) *By taking heed thereto according to thy Word*; doing all according to Rule. What hath a child a copy for, but to write after it? and what hath the Maſon a Line and a Plummet for, but to build by it? Let the Word of God be thy Lamp and thy Light, *Pſ.* 119. 105. *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my Path.* Order your ſteps according to the Word of God, as *David* prayed, *Pſal.* 119. 133. and then you will not ſtumble, nor give Conſcience any occaſion of reproaching you. You are careful when you walk in the Street, to keep out of the Chanal, to keep our of the way that may pollute and defile you: Oh Sirs, why do we not order our ſteps according to the Word of God?

Why

why do we not keep the path? why go we out of the path? Poor *David* did ſo ſometimes; therefore he prays, *Pſal.* 119. 176. *I have gone aſtray like a loſt ſheep; ſeek thy Servant, for I do not forget thy Commandments.* Would you not be willing, that Mercy and Peace might be upon you? *Gal.* 6. 16. *As many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God.* Beware, my friends, of ſetting up falſe rules to your ſelves, and I beſeech you, let not theſe directions which I am giving you be out of mind when I am out of ſight. I pray beware of ſetting up falſe rules; I ſhall name four, which we are very prone to walk by.

1. Beware of ſetting up the practice of others whether great or good for your rule; the practices of good men are not always agreable to the rule as they ſhould be. Miniſters and others may ſtep aſide, and too often do, therefore beware of ſetting up the

practice of others, whether great or good, to be your rule. Remember you are to follow others as they follow Chriſt. You will ſay, this was the practice of ſuch a Miniſter, this is the practice of ſuch a Profeſſor; but do they walk as Chriſt walked? If they follow Chriſt, thou mayſt follow them; but if they do not follow Chriſt, we muſt not follow them, be they who they will.

2. Beware of ſetting up the opinions of others, be they never ſo learned, for your rule, though they be the greateſt Doctors in the World, and called *Rabbi* never ſo much. Set not up the Opinion of any for your rule, any further than they have the Word of God for their opinion. When God ſpeaks we muſt conſider who, but when Man ſpeaks we muſt conſider what; I ſay when God ſpeaks we muſt not conſider what but who, but when Man ſpeaks we muſt not conſider who but what. We know God cannot erre,

erre, but we know that man may erre.

3. Beware of ſetting up the Cuſtoms of the times and places you live in for your rule. Oh this is the Cuſtom of the time, and this is the Cuſtom of the place, and what ſhall I be like no body? Do not make this your rule. Tell me where in all the Bible doth God allow this for a rule, to walk according to the Cuſtom of the times and places wherein we live?

4. Beware of ſetting up the Multitude for your example, *follow not a multitude to do evil.* Let not this ſatisfie you; nor ſerve your turn, to ſay, Why, every one doth ſo; it is general and common, the Multitude doth it; what ſhall I be ſingular, like no body in the World? Aſſure your ſelves that a Multitude is not a Law and Rule for you to walk by. I appeal to you Sirs, whether this be not good counſel, whether it would not be a great help to, and furtherance of the

peace and quiet of your Conſciences, to ſet up the Will of God revealed in his World for the rule of your all.

Direction III.

Set up Gods glory as the end of all. If you would not have Conſcience to reproach you another day, ſet up Gods glory as the end of all that you do. Often ſay to thine own ſoul, How doth this tend to the glory of God? will God be honoured by this? will God be glorified by this? When you are upon any undertaking, or when you are about any natural, civil, or religious action, think ſeriouſly with your ſelves, what do I aim at? what is my deſign in doing this or that? Is it the glory of God? O Sirs, if it be the pleaſing of your ſelves, Conſcience will be diſpleaſed: if it be the pleaſing of the fleſh, Conſcience will be diſpleaſed to purpoſe: if it be the pleaſing of the World, the pleaſing of one another, and not the pleaſing of God,

God, Conſcience will be diſpleaſed another day: for Conſcience is never pleaſed when the glory of God is not deſigned. 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. that Scripture ſhould be conſidered by my ſelf and you, *Whether you eat or drink, or whatſoever you do, do all to the Glory of God*; do all that God may be honoured. Sirs, *You are not your own, for you are bought with a price: glorifie God with your bodies, and with your ſpirits, which are Gods.* I appeal unto your Conſciences, whether this would not be the way to keep Conſcience quiet, that it ſhould have no cauſe to reproach you, if you did but ſet up the glory of God as the end of all. Certainly all we do will be never the leſs profitable or pleaſureable, contentful or ſatisfactory to us, for making Gods glory the end of all; but a thouſand to one, it would make every thing by ſo much the more profitable, pleaſurable and ſatisfactory to us, by how much more we make the glory of God

God the end thereof. O Sirs, how ſweetly will that meat go down that is eaten with an eye to the glory of God? How comfortable will thoſe dealings and trading in the World be, that are done with an eye to the glory of God?

Direction IV.

If you would ſo live, that Conſcience may have no occaſion to reproach you, *Set up an Inquiſition Court in your own ſouls.* You have heard talk of an Inquiſition in *Spain*, and in other Popiſh Countries; Oh that you would ſet up an *Inquiſition Court* in your own ſouls. We have Courts of Inquiry among us; O keep a weekly, nay a daily, *Court of Inquiry* in your own hearts. Commune with your own hearts every day, according to the example of *David*, *Pſal.* 4.4. Examine your ſelves often, be not ſeldom in the work of ſelf-examination, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *examine your ſelves, prove your own ſelves, whether you be in the faith:*

know

know ye not that Chriſt is in you? except ye be Reprobates or unapproved: whether you be reprobate ſilver, that is, not current. Examine your ſelves, prove your own ſelves. *Pſ.* 119. 59. *I thought on my ways* (ſaith *David*) *and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies.* Oh think on your ways, ſay often to thine own ſoul, What am I? what do I? how live I? whether go I? what will be my condition through all Eternity? will ſuch queſtions do you any harm? I appeal to your ſelves that are able to judge. O that I could get you to reckon often with your ſelves, and to keep a Petty Seſſions in your own ſouls, and ſit as Judges in a Court of Inquiry upon all your thoughts, words and actions, ſaying to them, come hither my thoughts, come hither my words, come hither my works, come let me examine you, come let me compare you with the rule; would not this prevent the accuſations of Conſcience if you did

but

but reckon with your ſelves once every day, if it were but one quarter of an hour in the day? See *Jer.* 8.6.

Direction V.

Set open your ears to the voice of Conſcience, when it is enlightened and directed by the Word of God. When Conſcience hath information from the Word of God, ſet open your ears to its voice, hearken to the voice of Conſcience; as *Abraham* once by Gods command hearkened to the voice of *Sarah*, *Gen.*21.12. *And God ſaid unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy ſight becauſe of the Lad, and becauſe of the Bond-woman: In all Sarah hath ſaid unto thee, hearken unto her voice.* Why ſo ſay I to you: in all that Conſcience, informed by the Word, ſhall ſay unto you, hearken unto its voice. *Be ſubject for Conſcience ſake*, is the command, *Rom.* 13. 5. This Subjection for Conſcience ſake to thoſe that are in Authority God hath commanded; Conſcience

will

will clamour, upbraid and reproach, if Gods Commands be not obeyed. Hearken to the voice of Conſcience, hearken to the directing voice, and the reproving voice of Conſcience. *Pſ.* 16.7. *My reins inſtruct me, &c.* that is, my inmoſt thoughts and ſecret motions do inſtruct me. Hearken to its directing voice, when it ſaith, *This is the way, walk in it, Iſa.* 30. 21. When thou heareſt a voice behind thee, ſaying, *This is the way, walk in it*; hearken alſo to its reproving voice, to its correcting voice. Thus *David* expoſtulates, *Pſal.* 42 & 43. *Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul? and why art thou diſquieted within me? Truſt ſtill in God.* Why art thou thus diffident? why art thou thus diſtruſtful? Thus *David* reproves himſelf, and chides himſelf. *Pſal.* 77. 10. *And I ſaid, this is my infirmity. But I will remember the years of the right hand of the moſt high. And I ſaid, this is my infirmity,* this is my frail-

frailty; I am to blame. Thus he checks himſelf, and hearkens to the voice of Conſcience.

Direction VI.

Set your ſelves againſt all ſin; both great and ſmall. Fight againſt all ſin, oppoſe all ſin; allow not your ſelves in the practice of any known ſin, nor in the omiſſion of any known Duty. *Paul* was very careful herein, *Acts* 8.23. *And Paul earneſtly beholding the Council ſaid, Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good Conſcience before God unto this day.* And how came he to live in all good Conſcience? It was before God. If we could well remember the firſt Direction, we ſhould the better live in all good Conſcience. *And herein* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of offence toward God and toward Men,* *Acts* 24. 16. *Pray for us* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *for we truſt we have a good Conſcience, in all things willing to live ho-*

honeſtly. Mark, *in all things:* ſo *Pſ.* 119. 101. *I have refrained my feet from every evil way, &c.* Verſe 128. *I eſteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every falſe way.* Pray obſerve here are three Univerſals: if you would not have Conſcience reproach you, ſet your ſelves againſt all Sin, againſt the commiſſion of all Sin, and againſt the omiſſion of all Duties both great and ſmall. If you be not faithful in the leaſt, you will not be truſted in the greateſt. *Luke* 16. 12. Make Conſcience of evil Thoughts, of idle and unſavoury Words and ſeeming Oaths: and according to the Rule abſtain from all appearance of evil, from all ſemblance of evil, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 22. Take heed of Deceit, and of every thing that hath the ſhew and ſemblance of evil. Take heed of Wanton Dreſſes: take heed of enſnaring Attire: I am confident that many poor creatures have been catch'd

as

as it were in a Snare and Trap by the Habit and dreſſes of the Profeſſors of our Age. Alas, what Inventions have we to draw Eyes, both behind and before, to this part of the Body, and to the other part of the Body? The Lord be merciful to us, is this the way to eſcape the reproaches of Conſcience? O Friends, take heed of deceit in you dealings; take heed of Lying for advantage; take heed of the Husk and Kernel of the Grape; though we drink not the Wine, may we not eat the Grape? if not the Grape, may we not eat the Husk of the Grape? And if not the Husk, yet may we not eat the Kernel of the Grape? No. *Num.* 6. 4. *This is the Law of the Nazarite, All the days of his Separation he ſhall eat nothing that is made of the Vine-Tree, from the Kernels even to the Husk.* He muſt not drink Wine, that was the Law of the *Nazarite*. That he might not be enſnared nor un-

under a temptation to drink Wine, he muſt not meddle with any thing coming of the Vine, not the very Husk or the Kernel, leſt he be enſnared. Our firſt Mother *Eve* was drawn to Eating by Seeing: O take heed of Temptations and Snares, and be not a Snare or Temptation unto others; but make Conſcience of all ſin, whether great or ſmall. Nay further, if there be any queſtion or doubt about any thing, whether it be a ſin or no, what ſhall we do then? Some ſay it is a ſin, and ſome ſay it is not a ſin; and poſſibly ſome good men may ſay it is not a ſin, and ſome good men may ſay it is a ſin; what ſhall we do in ſuch a doubtful matter? I ſhall quickly reſolve you; Take the ſureſt ſide. In ſuch a caſe when the matter is doubtful, the ſureſt way now is not to make or meddle at all with it.

Was there not Meat enough for them to eat in the Primitive Times, be-

beſides that which did give offence? Some doubt whether it was lawful to eat of this or that meat; what need we eat of it? *Paul* ſaith in ſuch a caſe, *I will never eat fleſh while the world ſtandeth, rather than offend a weak brother.* It is not lawful, ſaith one; I will do it for all that, ſaith another. They are not of *Paul*'s Spirit. And as for Dreſſes and Habits, are there not enough beſides thoſe which are queſtionable, and which both Ancient and Modern Divines have all condemned as ſinful? Poſſibly ſome will aſſume a greater Liberty, and we are now generally grown to a greater Latitude; but tell me, Is there not enough of other ſorts, but we muſt uſe ſuch habits and dreſſes as are doubtful, queſtionable, and offenſive? God help us to conſider of it. In all matters doubtful and queſtionable, ſtill take the ſureſt ſide. If you do that which is queſtionable and doubtful, you may ſin, and poſ-

ſibly

ſibly it may be found to be a ſin at the Day of Judgment: and if ſo, what will you do then? It was the ſpeech of Mr. *Bolton* concerning long hair: *You ſay the wearing of long Hair is not a ſin, but what if be it found at the Day of Judgment to be a ſin? You will then wiſh, O that I had left it off, or never uſed it.* Men are not infallible, Miniſters are not infallible, no not the beſt of them; you are not to ground on them as if they could not be miſtaken: therefore in all doubtful caſes chuſe the ſureſt ſide. There is Meat enough to eat beſides that which is doubtful; and there is Apparel enough to wear beſides that which is offenſive and queſtionable. If you would ſo live that Conſcience may have no cauſe to reproach you, my Counſel to you is, Take always in doubtful matters the ſureſt ſide, which is not to meddle or make with it at all: for if you do it you may ſin, and at Judgment it may be found

to

te be ſin. But if you do it not, you are ſafe and free.

Direction VII.

Set up Chriſt as your pattern. If you would have Conſcience not to reproach you another day, take Chriſt for your example. 1 *Pet.* 2. 21, 23. *For even hereunto were ye called, becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps, &c.* We ſhould pace after him, we ought to walk as Chriſt walked. If you would have Conſcience not to reproch you, make Chriſt your pattern; think, ſpeak and do, as you are perſuaded Chriſt would, were he in your caſe, were he in your place on earth: ſpeak, think and do, as you think he would; ask your ſelves, would Chriſt neglect his Fathers buſineſs as I do? Would he mis-ſpend his time, and trifle it away, that went about continually doing good? Would Chriſt have ſerved one Luſt, and another Luſt, as I do, and have made pro-

viſion

viſion for the fleſh to fulfil the Luſts thereof? would he give himſelf to rioting and drunkenneſs, to chambering and wantonneſs as I do? as you would not have Conſcience to reproach you, make Chriſt your Pattern and Exemplar.

Direction VIII.

Sit under a Powerful Miniſtry. If you would prevent the reproaches of Conſcience, love and like that Miniſter beſt that ſpeaks to Conſcience moſt: do not hate him that rebukes, as they, *Amos* 5. 10. but ſay as *David*, (*Pſal.* 141. 5.) *Let the righteous ſmite me, it ſhall be a kindneſs; and let him reprove me, it ſhall be an excellent oyl, that ſhall not break my head.* Let him ſmite me, I will not be offended with him, I will not ſmite again; when he ſmites me, it ſhall be as a precious Oyntment. The meaning is, Let him ſmite me with Reproofs, let him reprove me, deal faithfully and plainly with me. And

(Sirs)

(Sirs) I fear that my ſelf and many of my Brethren in the Miniſtry may have much to anſwer for another day, for that we do not deal more faithfully, more plainly and downrightly with Souls. Miniſters are under a Temptation to pleaſe their Hearers, as well as others, and are loth to offend them; but God forbid that Chriſts Miniſters ſhould be ſervants of Men, or Men-pleaſers, or Women-pleaſers. Let them look to it, that they pleaſe their Lord and Maſter Chriſt.

Direction IX.

Set upon nothing, on which you cannot, on which you dare not, pray for a bleſſing. Never undertake any thing, never be imployed about any thing, upon which thou doſt not dare to pray for a bleſſing. 1 *Tim.* 4. 4, 5. *Every thing is ſanctified by the Word and Prayer.* I muſt have a Word to be my Rule for it, and I muſt make a prayer for a Bleſſing on it, elſe I cannot

not expect that it ſhould be ſanctified and bleſſed to me. Now (Sirs) how many things are there that we do, that we dare not pray to God for a Bleſſing on? It may be you ſpend two or three hours at the Looking Glaſs, can you pray for a Bleſſing upon the time ſo ſpent? can you pray for a Bleſſing upon your dreſſing and attiring your ſelves, and habiting your ſelves in the way and manner that you do? can you pray, O Lord, let this way of habiting and dreſſing my ſelf be for thy glory, and for my good, and for the example of others? Dare any of you go and make a prayer to God for this? Adventure not upon any thing upon which you dare not pray for a Bleſſing.

Direction X.

If you would not have Conſcience to reproach you, *Set about all in the name and ſtrength of Chriſt.* For that is the rule which the Apoſtle giveth, *Col.* 3. 17. *And whatſoever ye do in*

word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do all according to the will and the command of Christ, do all by the strength and help of Christ, and do all to the glory of Christ.

1. Do all according to the will and command of Christ. In *Mat.* 18. 20. the name of Christ signifies his command.

2. Do all by the strength and help of Christ. In this sense also is the name of Christ used, *Luke* 10. 17. and *Psal.* 44. 5. *Luke* 17.

3. Do all to the Glory of Christ, which is sometimes to be understood by his name, as *Psal.* 31. 3. Oh that People would ask themselves, Is this according to the will and command of Christ that I am now a doing? can I expect the strength and help of Christ in that I am now a doing? is this for the glory of Christ which I am now a doing? when thou art about any Duty, say to Christ, all our sufficie

cy is of thee, we have none of our own, 2*Cor.* 3. 5. *John* 15. 5. Say as *Paul*, *I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me*, *Phil.* 4. 13. And thus I have given you ten Directions how you may ſo live that Conſcience may not reproach you.

Caſe II.

I come now to ſpeak a litte to the ſecond caſe. What if we have neglected theſe rules and directions which have been laid before us. If you have neglected to walk according to rule, and have given Conſcience juſt cauſe to reproach you; and if Conſcience does reproach you, and if you ask me, How may we get the reproaches of Conſcience wiped off, and get Conſcience quiet again? I anſwer in two words, *Repent and Believe.*

1. Repent of that before the Lord which Conſcience reproacheth you for, mourn for it, be aſhamed of it, judge and condemn your ſelves for

what is past, resolve against it for the time to come; this is a good course. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness,* 1 *Cor.* 11. 31. *For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged*; and if we acknowleg our transgressions, and accept of the punishment of our iniquity. Read *Lev.* 26. 40,41,42. There is not a better way to wipe off the reproaches of Conscience, than by the tears of repentance. Follow the example of that Woman that came behind our Lord and Saviour, *and washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.* A service perhaps that you would be loth to put your hair to; but Sirs, if you would have Conscience to be quiet, then seriously set upon the work of repentance.

2. *Believe.* By Faith set Christs blood on work, to wipe off the aspersions and reproaches of Conscience,

to

to purifie and pacifie Conscience, get Conscience sprinkled with the Blood of Christ, *Heb.* 9. 14. You read of one *Mat.* 15. 28. that set the Pity and Power of Christ on work to make her Daughter whole. *Jesus answered and said unto her, O Woman, great is thy Faith! Be it to thee even as thou wilt.* Christ seemed not to regard her a while, but she followed him, and set his Pity and Power on work. Faith will set the Blood of Christ on work, to wipe off the reproaches of Conscience. The *Centurions* Faith set Christ on work to heal his Servant, *Lord* (saith he) *my Servant lyeth at home sick of the Palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The Centurion answered and said, Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my Roof, but speak the word onely, and my Servant shall be healed. And Jesus said unto the Centurion, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed so be it done*

unto thee. And his Servant was healed in the self same hour, Mat. 8.13.

The Lepers Faith did set Christ on work, *Mat.* 8.2,3. *And there came a Leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean: and immediately his Leprosie was cleansed.* The Father of the Child that had a deaf and a dumb Spirit, his Faith set Christ on work, *Mark* 9.23, 24, 25. *Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straight way the Father of the Child cryed out with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.* The Faith of the Woman diseased with an Issue of blood set Christ on work, *Mat.* 9.21. *For she said within her self, If I may but touch the Hem of his Garment, I shall be whole.* And it follows, *the Woman was made whole from that hour.* The Faith of the poor Leper set Christ on work

work, *Luke* 17. 19. *And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thy faith hath made thee whole.*

And likewiſe the Womans Faith (*Luke* 7 48.) ſet Chriſt on work for the pardon of her ſins; he ſaid unto her, *Thy ſins are forgiven thee.* And (ver. 50.) Chriſt tells her, *Thy faith hath ſaved thee, go in peace.*

And likewiſe the Faith of blind *Bartimeus* (*Mar.* 10. 51, 52.) ſets Chriſts Power and Pity on work, and obtained Healing. And the Faith of the two blind men in *Mat.* 9. 27, 28, 29, 30 Chriſt touched their eyes and ſaid, *According to your faith, ſo be it unto you.* And their Eyes were opened.

O if you could but (according to theſe Examples) ſet Faith on work for the healing of your ſouls, Conſcience would be quiet. Thus beſpeak and expoſtulate with thine own Conſcience, and ſay, It is true (Conſcience) I have ſinned, and deſerved to be

be reproached and condemned, but I fly to the Bloud of Chriſt for cleanſing, and I apply that by Faith. Nay (ſaith Conſcience) if thou fly to that City of Refuge, I can then no longer purſue after thee; thou art ſafe enough from me. If thou makeſt the Bloud of Chriſt thy Refuge, thou art then ſecured from all the Storms, and Terrors, and Reproaches of Conſcience. If you would not have Conſcience upbraid you, accuſe and condemn you, ſet about the work of Repentance and Faith, and then whatſoever cauſe you have given Conſcience to reproach you, it will reproach you no more, it will be quiet and at peace with you; always provided that you ſet about this work of Faith and Repentance ſeriouſly and in good earneſt. Conſider what hath been ſaid, and the Lord give you underſtanding in all things.

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